

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A holding material, for a catalytic converter comprising a catalyst carrier, a casing for receiving the catalyst carrier, and the holding material mounted on the catalyst carrier and interposed in a gap between the catalyst carrier and the casing, wherein the holding material is made of inorganic fibers, ~~and~~
at least an area of exhaust-gas-inlet-side of the holding material is set to be smaller in basis weight than any other area of the holding material, and
wherein the gap between the catalyst carrier and the casing is substantially constant along an axial length of the catalytic converter.
2. (Original) A holding material for a catalytic converter according to Claim 1, wherein when basis weight of a smaller basis weight area is set as 1, basis weight of the other area is not smaller than 1.15.
3. (Original) A holding material for a catalytic converter according to Claim 1, wherein in a smaller basis weight area, basis weight is smallest at an open end portion of the holding material and increases continuously to reach the other area.
4. (Original) A holding material for a catalytic converter according to Claim 1, wherein when average basis weight of a smaller basis weight area is set as 1, average basis weight of the other area is not smaller than 1.15.
5. (Original) A holding material for a catalytic converter according to Claim 1, wherein a ratio, in axial length, of a smaller basis weight area to the other area is in a range of from 1:9 to 9:1.

6. (New) The holding material for a catalytic converter according to Claim 1, wherein the catalyst carrier has a constant diameter throughout its length.